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The Common Cause

The Organ of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies.

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[*The N.U.W.S.S. does not hold itself responsible for opinions expressed in signed articles or in correspondence.*

All MSS. and letters relating thereto should be addressed to the Editor, THE COMMON CAUSE, *Evelyn House, 62, Oxford Street, W. 1*]

Notes and News.

The Queen's Message to the Forces.

The women of England and of all the Empire, we believe, will join with all their hearts in the message which her Majesty the Queen has sent from herself, and on their behalf, to the men of the Navy and Army and Air Force in this time of special stress and danger. None of us can fail to realise that the future of our country depends in greater or less degree on the conduct of each one of us at this time, and we all want to join in sending to those who have so much the hardest task, and who face dangers and suffering which few of us can even imagine, the expression of our deep admiration and reverent gratitude. We are glad that Her Majesty has spoken for us.

Unequal Pay for Women Teachers.

We note with great regret that the Kent Education Committee has adopted a new scale of salaries for teachers, which differentiates very widely between the payment of women and the payment of men. The minimum for male head-teachers will be £145, and the maximum £340 per annum. For female head-teachers the minimum will be £130, and the maximum £270 per annum.

Health and Munitions.

After speaking of the devotion of the women munition makers, last Thursday, Mr. Churchill said that the main thing the Ministry of Munitions has to be careful about with regard to them is that they should not overstrain themselves at their work, as their great desire to increase the outputs, "synchronising as it does with a marked reduction in the nutritive qualities of the food which is available for their consumption, raises a series of problems to which the attention of all firms employing women in large numbers, as well as the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Munitions, must be insistently directed." In connection with this, we note with satisfaction that the Home Secretary, with the agreement of the Ministry of Munitions, proposes to make an order, requiring that seats be provided for all women workers in munition factories engaged in processes that allow of opportunities for resting. We believe it to be a recognised fact that output is not increased by long hours, because of ensuing fatigue and loss of energy. In the interests of munitions alone, then, this Order would be wise. But how much more so when we consider, not only the present health of thousands of girls and women, but the health of thousands of actual or potential mothers, and, through them, the health of the next generation.

Courageous Women.

There have been many tributes to women's bravery this week. References were made in the House of Commons to the devotion and courage shown by some women workers in a munition factory, who, in a shed full of live cartridges, succeeded in keeping down a serious fire until the brigade arrived. The safety of the rest of the factory was due to their efforts. There were many women among those who received O.B.E. Medals, presented by Lord Crewe, on April 29th. Seventy-eight nurses were decorated by the King on April 27th, and Miss Audrey Forse, V.A.D., of Englefield Green, has been awarded the Military Medal for devotion to duty under fire.

Women's Suffrage in Other Lands.

We regret to see that the Swedish First Chamber has rejected the Women's Suffrage Bill by 62 votes to 36. News from Sweden takes a long time to reach England just now, and we are anxiously waiting to learn further details.

A Women's Suffrage amendment was proposed to the Bill passed by the Italian Chamber giving the franchise to all soldiers. The Government requested that the amendment should not be pressed, as it needed fuller discussion and the Chamber was about to adjourn, but Signor Orlando stated that he himself was in favour of it, and it was received with acclamation by the Chamber. Presumably it will come up for discussion when the Chamber meets again in May.

The Luxury Tax Committee.

The Committee appointed to settle the list of luxuries that are to be taxed, and the amount of the tax, is called The M.P.'s Committee, which might lead one to regard the absence of women upon it as reasonable and legitimate. It appears, however, that the Committee is not exclusively made up of members of Parliament, and it therefore seems to us extraordinary—if it were not so ordinary—that no women have been asked to serve. We wonder when it will be taken as a matter of course by M.P.'s, Government and other officials, and the general public that both sexes should be called upon to give their services, their time, and their experience in this way. Women have an equal responsibility and an equal right with men in this, as in other respects, and we heartily deplore that their recent enfranchisement has not yet brought about a realisation of this fact.

"The Common Cause."

We regret that circumstances have forced us to raise the price of THE COMMON CAUSE to 2d., but we hope our readers will take note of the fact that we are one of the last newspapers to raise its price.

THE WOMEN'S MUNICIPAL PARTY

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Women and Munitions.

In the House of Commons last Friday, Mr. Winston Churchill, Minister of Munitions, speaking of the enormous increase in war output, said that one of the chief causes for this was the work of women. "Nearly 750,000 women are actively employed at the present time under the Ministry of Munitions. Hardly any of them had industrial experience before the war, but they constitute to-day an additional resource in Labour power without which we could not carry on. The diligence and devotion of these women, their skill, their strength, above all, their loyal and unwearying spirit are beyond all praise." . . . After speaking of the necessity of saving women from the over-strain which might result from their great devotion, Mr. Churchill went on: "It is a striking fact that more than nine-tenths, in many branches far more than nine-tenths, of the whole manufacture of shells which constitute the power and terror of the British Artillery, are due to the labours of women, and of women who before the war never saw a lathe. But throughout the whole area of munitions, not excluding the most arduous and dangerous form of service, women are largely, and will be increasingly employed. It must not be supposed that this women's labour is a mere makeshift which we have been forced to put up with in the general stress of events. On the contrary, aided by the proper development of industrial organisation and by increasing standardisation of production, not only have these enormous outputs been produced by women's labour, but the cost has gone down and the quality has gone up to an almost incredible extent." After giving some very striking figures to illustrate the reduction in the cost of shells and the "trust-worthiness of the ammunition" which these women have made, the Minister said: "No one can be blind to the profound significance of these facts or to the far-reaching consequences which they will carry to the industrial, political, and social life of this country long after the war is over. It is from this source that the wounded nation will draw new strength and energy, not merely enabling it to repair the ruin of the war, but flowing onward in a perennial stream which, if wisely and humanely guided, will enrich and expand the fortunes of the whole world."

Two or three considerations at once present themselves to suffragists who have heard or read Mr. Churchill's eloquent speech. The first is, perhaps, satisfaction at the great service which women have been able to do, and which has converted so many former anti-feminists to a realisation of their capacity for work and devotion. The strongest is hope for the future, when that service can be used for the purposes of peace instead of war. No nation has yet tested the productive capacity of women in normal conditions. It has needed the overthrow of all normal conditions by war to make men realise, even in a partial degree, the kind of results that may be achieved by using the work of all the community instead of only part of it. And, so far, it has been used almost exclusively to produce weapons of destruction. But many of the women who now furnish the "nine-tenths of the shells which constitute the power and terror of the British Artillery," could, in happier times, make houses, furniture, utensils, clothes, food, motor-cars, bicycles, and thousands of useful and beautiful things; and the aeroplanes of which, by the help of women, as many are now made in one week as were made in the whole of 1914, could be used for peace as well as for war.

We are in the midst of an industrial revolution far greater than any that has taken place in the past, and the results of which we can hardly yet guess. If recognised and guided by statesmen (of both sexes) they ought to be an enormous gain to humanity and an unfailing source of renewed strength to the nations. There is no knowing what a nation might not achieve which used the services of both sexes in conditions of freedom and real equality. But, here, a question at once presents itself, and for the moment checks our joy—will they be so guided? It is, of course, a great satisfaction that former opponents should make the kind of speeches that Mr. Churchill and others have now made—and should appear to recognise the value of women's work But are they acting on the speeches, and do they recognise that women are fit, not only for mechanical toil (though they do not shrink from that), but for responsible work of every kind? We fear not yet, and we wonder, with some heartsinking, how many years of war it will take to bring the realisation home to them.

Last week, on the same day that the Minister of Munitions' speech was printed in *The Times*, the Engineering Supplement of the same paper published an interesting and disturbing article about women in cartridge-filling factories. The state-

ment of the writer, "An Engineering Correspondent," is that not only are fit men being employed for work which can be done as well by women, but that many women have recently been discharged to make room either for men, or for boys who cannot do the work half as well as women. He writes: "Women, in a word, have been tried on the business of filling shells, and have made good completely; and if the Armies had to depend solely on women, with, perhaps, a few over-age men for the heaviest work in the factories that are imperfectly equipped for handling weights mechanically, the fact would give no anxiety whatever to those who understood the industry. . . . In some occupations, indeed, women are employed on work they do satisfactorily but produce a less output than men. There does not appear, however, to be even this excuse for employing men on shell-filling; it is notorious in some shops that women working on the same shells, with the same facilities and utensils, have repeatedly turned out much larger quantities than men." The writer goes on to argue that women are at least as suitable as men for the inspection by which the processes have to be accompanied at every stage, as no one who has worked with both men and women in these trades will deny that the women are at least as conscientious and responsible about their work as the men. Yet, women are being dismissed and men, nay, even inexperienced and expensive boys, taken on.

These are grave charges, and there is nothing in the information we have received, nor in the facts that are being made public, to contravert them. They are, indeed, only a fresh illustration of the fact that is continually being brought home to us, that, in spite of all that has passed, and all that has been said by the Minister of Munitions and others, many of the authorities do still look on the labour of women as a makeshift and not as a permanent part of the industrial life of the country which should receive equal treatment with the labour of men. We believe that this outlook is hampering the work of the nation and diminishing its output at the present most critical time, and that it will be a grave danger in the period of reconstruction. We urge the Ministry of Munitions to consider the matter, and to cultivate an enlightened point of view, both among its own staff and among all those outside persons over whom it may have influence now and in the days to come.

The Mother and the Education Bill.—II.

Readers of the article in last week's Common Cause will have no difficulty in understanding why the proposed raising of the school age to fifteen is regarded by the mothers of the mean streets with a terror which would move the hardest heart to pity. They are not averse from education—their whole lives testify to their devotion to their children, but they realise that what happened at the last raising of the school age is about to happen again. They know that the entire cost of the extra year's maintenance will be wrung out of their own flesh and blood, and out of that of their young children. Extended enquiries have never revealed a single husband who shared the cost, even to the extent of a shilling a week. It must be remembered that a man's supposed obligation to support his family is construed in quite a different fashion to all other cases of indebtedness. At the highest, it is never held to be greater than what the man, after a reasonable satisfaction of his own needs, can conveniently spare. Thus it is quite common to find a wife receiving just the same amount from her husband when the children number six as when they numbered two. No court in the country would demand that a father should surrender his own modest "bit" because legislative or other action had increased the cost of maintaining his family. It is the woman who, in practice, is held answerable, but she, as has been shown, has no means of bearing the burden. To declare, as is true, that most men do their best for their families, according to their lights, contributes nothing towards settling the question as to the ultimate responsibility for the due nurture of the rising generation. The education of the country as a whole has hitherto, no doubt, been deplorably bad, as the folly of much of our legislation testifies, but the poor child, like the rich one, has more primary needs even than that of education. Somebody must house, clothe, and feed him if he is to derive any benefit from his teachers, but this is the point which, so far as concerns the common folk, is systematically shirked. Let us see what was the lowest sum on which a boy of fourteen could be clothed and booted at pre-war prices. Detailed and independent estimates have been obtained from three thrifty and capable women, of slightly varying economic grades. These estimates come out respectively at £2 4s. 10¾d., £3 1s. 1¾d., and £3 8s. 8d. As the first included no overcoat—this having been inherited from an older brother—we will take the next. It works out at an average of 1s. 2d. a week, and the boy's incidental expenses—such as boot mending, pocket money, fares—cost another 4d. or 6d. All mothers know the voracity of lads in their early 'teens, and no boy of fourteen could be sufficiently fed, even before the war, for less than 4s. 6d. a week. Now where is this six shillings a week, or, rather, its equivalent at post-war prices, to come from? To attempt to wring it covertly out of the necessaries of the mother and younger children is simply to depress still further the present appallingly low level of physical well-being among the poor. According to Dr. Hamer's report for 1916 only 7.9 per cent. of the older boys examined in Bethnal Green reached the "good" class (p. 25), and this, though during the last three and a half years the condition of London children has improved, owing to the bettered economic position of their mothers. To compel the Bethnal Green woman to squeeze in another lodger, economise in soap and soda, drop her insurance, dispense with her own underclothing, and cut down the already scanty food supply for the whole household seems a somewhat odd method of promoting the well-being of her family. It will be contended that the economic condition of the workers after the war will compare so favourably with those which previously obtained that the cost of the extra year's maintenance will easily be borne. It is, indeed, probable that wages reckoned in money may be doubled, or trebled, and also that the pecuniary position of the workers compared with that of the rest of the community may be distinctly improved, but this is far from saying that they will have a greater command of commodities. The destruction of unimaginable quantities of raw material, the enormous war debt, the inflated currency, the killing and maiming of armies of potential producers, can result in nothing but long years of scarcity and struggle, marked by ever soaring prices.

It is sometimes said that the withdrawal of adolescent labour will bring about a greater demand for, and a better remuneration of, adult workers, but any movement in this direction would be but small. Industrial history shows that employers, as a rule, when deprived of cheap labour resort to machinery, or to a re-organisation of their industry. It is more subtly argued that if social reconstruction is started with a raised school age, wages will imperceptibly accommodate themselves to the new charge. Perhaps so, if the burden fell on the male wage-earner, but it will not so fall any more than have the other State requisitions on behalf of the children. Even before the war real wages were declining, and this will probably be still more the case after it.

* * * * *

It needs some hardihood to appeal to the middle-class women of the country, in the middle of their own anxieties and many patriotic labours, to begin so soon another agitation—one certain to incur much powerful opposition—bureaucratic and otherwise, and easily lending itself to cruel misrepresentation. But women fought for their enfranchisement on the express ground that experience had proved that their knowledge, insight, and sympathy were essential to the welfare of the body-politic. To what better use can they put their newly-won citizenship than to determine that this Bill shall not go through, unless and until the mothers adversely affected by it are in some way guaranteed the means of adequately supporting their children during the additional school period? Detailed figures and estimates must be furnished. The influential people behind the Bill must not be allowed to ride off on the vague assertion that "the poor always manage somehow." "Somehow" has hitherto meant always the sacrifice of the wife. The writer does not indeed believe that the universal endowment of children by the State is either possible or desirable. The proposed new change, however, stands on rather a different basis. It is sudden in its incidence, will coincide with a period of acute economic stress, and its victims will be a mass of new voters who have not been allowed time to realise the powers of self-protection which inhere in their new status. Under these circumstances, women are surely justified in insisting that if Parliament cannot, or will not, compel the individual fathers to shoulder the burden, it must transfer the responsibility in this special case to the community at large, and obtain the necessary funds from rates or taxes.

Advocates of the new measure will hardly venture to declare that such an addition to the huge national expenditure anticipated after the war could not be borne. If neither the wage-

earning fathers can pay the piper, nor yet the community as a whole, how in the name of common sense, are the poverty-stricken mothers to manage it?

Better drop the Bill than rest it on such an absurdity.

Anna Martin.

The Irish National School Teachers' Congress.

The Congress of the Irish School Teachers, held in Galway in the week of April 1st, was marked by very distinct differences from that held in Cambridge. One difference should be noted for the credit of the Irish organisation. The resolution demanding equal pay for equal work was carried unanimously, as has been the case at other meetings of the Congress. It would be interesting to trace some of the reasons for this different result, but it would take too long. One, at least, may be noted. The Irish School Teachers—men and women—are, and have been for so long, in a desperate position as regards conditions and payment, that absolute necessity has driven them to stand shoulder to shoulder. These words are an understatement of the case. The position of the Irish teacher, with a commencing salary of £26, was sufficiently hard before the rise in the cost of living—in that far off happy time when eggs averaged 10d. per dozen, milk 3d. per quart. It is now intolerable. True, there have been increases of salary and war bonuses, which have brought the average commencing salary to £64 per annum, but these have not kept pace with the cost of living. As a whole, the teachers—men and women—are seething with discontent, which, in most cases, is well founded. They regard the system itself as responsible for most of their grievances, and behind the system is the British Government which created it.

They are aware that when there is differentiation between British and Irish education, such differentiation is almost invariably in favour of the richer country. They were told, in the address of the President of the Congress, that the administration of the "Equivalent Grant" has always been unfair to Ireland, "being calculated on the basis most unjust to this country." This question of the "Equivalent Grant" may as well be explained in detail, as it is the main factor in the present educational unrest. The Act of Union provided that, in the matter of Treasury Grants, Ireland should receive equivalent treatment with England and Scotland. Therefore, in 1892, Mr. Goschen gave Ireland what was called an "Equivalent Grant" for education, in connection with similar grants for England and Scotland. The grant was based on the supposed relative contributions of the three countries to the Imperial Exchequer, a calculation which disregarded the promise of equivalent treatment regardless of relative contribution, a promise certainly understood in Article Seven of the Act of Union, and in the speeches of many English statesmen. Further, in the calculations of expenditure on "Irish Services" were included several admitted since by Treasury representatives to be "Imperial Services." The basis was, however, adopted, and known as the "Goschen ratio," and under this Ireland received an Exchequer Grant less by 20 per cent. than it would have been if the grant had been calculated on the attendance basis.

The years, from 1892, were years of increasing emigration and decreasing birth rate. School attendance in England and Scotland increased, in Ireland the averages steadily fell. In 1897 the Goschen Ratio was discarded, and the amount of the grants to the three countries calculated on the "attendance basis." As already stated, if this basis had been adopted in 1892 it would have increased the Irish grant 20 per cent. Adopted in 1897, it worked out to the great disadvantage of Ireland, owing to the decrease of average attendance. In 1902 a new Education Act was passed for the United Kingdom, under which another "Equivalent Grant" of £185,000 was promised to Ireland, the amount this time being calculated on the basis of population, declared by Mr. Wyndham, then Chief Secretary for Ireland, to be "not fair, but least unfair" to this country. The grants for England and for Scotland were paid, and spent on education: practically the whole of the Irish grant was diverted to other purposes. It was re-christened the "Irish Development Fund," and was used for purposes which should have been charges on the Imperial Exchequer, such as grants to the Congested Districts Board, and, in 1909, to defray the losses under the Land Purchase Act. Both, probably, meritorious objects, but neither directly concerned with primary education, for which the grant was originally made. No wonder an Irish teacher has termed the Development Fund "the Fund for Arresting Development," and that another, speaking at the recent Congress, referred to the "Equivocal Grant!"

One more point. The last White Paper, with the long-promised increases, withheld for five months, saw the light at the close of last year. According to Mr. Duke, the equivalent of the English expenditure should have been £384,000, but the actual expenditure provided for in the White Paper amounts only to £280,000. What will be done with the surplus of £104,000? Will it be expended on Irish education, as is the case in England and Scotland, when balances, if any, are so used? As a matter of fact, in both cases, the whole grant is generally used, and sometimes Supplementary Estimates have to be brought forward. In the case of Ireland, during the last twenty years, about £300,000 voted for Irish education, but not spent, has been returned to the Treasury. At the same time, the commencing salary for women teachers is fixed by the White Paper at £64 a year, and for men teachers at £78 a year. Nearly three centuries ago, Erasmus wrote from Louvain: "Teachers are, as a rule, a shabby, broken-down set of men. So mean is their place, so miserable their pittance, that you would say pigs were being reared there, not respectable folks' children" —*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1918.)

Those responsible for drafting the scale laid down in the White Paper clearly agree with the views current in the days of Erasmus, and would regard him as a mere advocate of reckless expenditure. Meanwhile, what is the effect?

An unnoticed line in the Press reports of the anti-conscription demonstration of Tuesday last in Dublin, recorded the enforced closing of many National Schools, as the teachers were taking part in the one-day strike. Those who can see below the surface will trace a connection between the dry facts and figures of this article—all fresh in the mind of the Irish teacher, though unknown to the British public—and the closed doors of the schools on that sunny April day.

Dora Mellone.

The Women Motor Drivers' Trade Union.

Early in the war it was realised what the motor trade was going to mean for women, and it was realised, too, that there were many rocks ahead of the individual driver if she was left unprotected by a union of any kind. To give this protection, the Society of Women Motor Drivers was formed by a group of women, among whom were Mrs. Bernard Drake; the Hon. Gabrielle Borthwick, of the Borthwick Garage; Miss McLaren, who had been from the first deeply interested in the development of the trade; Miss Tynan, who had wide experience in trade-union organisation; and Mrs. Chettle, who undertook the secretaryship. It was formed with difficulty, partly because to the class of women who entered the trade, Unionism had long been held up as a bogy. Too many thought of a Union as being some dire conspiracy existing to wring from benevolent employers benefits that were undeserved. Gradually, however, owing to the patience and unremitting energy of its Secretary, the Society was founded; it met once a month in the "Women's Service" rooms at 58, Victoria Street, and discussed problems of the trade, of wages, and of industry in general.

The peculiar responsibility which devolved upon the women in the trade was put before them—it had been a man's trade, it had a traditional standard of work, of wages, which the men had felt; on the women who filled their places lay the responsibility of maintaining that tradition, and of insuring that if the motor industry was to be a woman's industry, then the women should be valued and respected. In so far as this point of view was brought forward the Society felt that its existence was justified. After a time, however, it became apparent to the officials that they were in danger of overlapping with the men's Union, the "Licensed Vehicle Workers' Union," who were opening their membership to women. As soon as this was realised the Union was approached, and on March 3rd, after many negotiations, the Society of Women Motor Drivers dissolved itself, and became a recognised and self-governing branch of the L.V.W.U., known as the "Central London Branch." So it is to-day; the members of the Branch are the old members of the Society of Women Motor Drivers, joined by the women members of L.V.W.U., who have been transferred to this Branch. The members elected their own officials and committee, and meet on the first Sunday in the month at the same rooms in 58, Victoria Street. Members of other branches, the men's branches, attend, and there are discussions on very much the same lines as before. But there is this difference. The Society of Women Motor Drivers stood alone, it was small and weak, if

See "Coming Events," p. 35.

it saw injustice done to its members it could act, but the weapons it possessed were not equal to the task, it had no backing in the Labour world, and no money; to-day, at the back of the Women's Branch there stands the great and powerful organisation of the Men's Union. The membership is open to women drivers and mechanics, garage employees; the entrance fee and subscriptions are the same for both men and women, 1s. 2d. entrance fee and a weekly contribution varying from 6d. to 3d. They are then entitled to all the benefits of the Union, legal aid and advice, accident pay, victimisation and dispute pay, and beyond all this they are making their own position strong in the Labour world. To-day no trained woman need be unemployed, work stands ready to her hands, and wherever she goes she can demand and will obtain a fair wage; but there are days coming when the Labour market will be flocked with the returned soldiers and with the men and women who have been working on the war trades; the position of the individual woman will be hard to see then. As far as is humanly possible the Union is prepared to assist all its members, men and women, through those dark days, and they will fight for fair treatment for both men and women. This point should not be forgotten. Unionism is not only an insurance for the present, but it is an insurance against the future, and besides all this is trade fellowship, which possesses its own peculiar value to each member. Women drivers and mechanics on private and commercial work who not already belong to the Union should communicate with the Secretary, Miss R. D. Fox, 33A, High Street, St. John's Wood, N.W. 8, who will be glad to supply all information.

CITIZENSHIP, NOT SEX.

"It is a question of citizenship, not of sex."

Such is Mrs. Grenfell's opinion on the subject of women's holding administrative posts, as she herself expressed it to our representative last week.

Mrs. Grenfell is a member of the American delegation which is at present visiting "England under war conditions," and will report her impressions to her state when she returns to America. She herself holds an important administrative post under the Government, being Chairman of the State Board of Corrections of Colorado, and, in addition, she is a well-known public speaker. She looks on her position as supremely natural. To her it is merely an obvious duty of citizenship. "Then you are a suffragist?" our representative asked her, and Mrs. Grenfell laughed as she replied "of course!" Of course she is a suffragist when she stops to think of it, but then Colorado adopted Women's Suffrage in 1893, and ever since Mrs. Grenfell was twenty-one she has been accustomed to take her place as a recognised citizen.

Among the Labour members of the delegation our representative interviewed Mrs. Sarah Bird Spraggan, and had with her a most interesting conversation on unemployment in America. Mrs. Spraggan is the Missouri State Vice-Chairman of the Women's Division of the Council of National Defence. Every state has its Chairman and Vice-Chairman, and its local employment office, where it is the regular thing for a woman out of work to apply. The result of this thorough organisation is that labour is infinitely more fluid than in this country, and unemployment is reduced to a very low point. An interesting feature of the American system of dealing with unemployment is that local employment offices are making no effort to instal women in what are considered men's posts. Without entering into the rights and wrongs of women's exclusion from certain trades, the Council of National Defence feels that, when the drain on man-power becomes serious, women will automatically replace men, but that the greater the so-called "temporary" replacement, the greater the dislocation after the war. It is therefore endeavouring to preserve, as long as possible, the existing conditions of industry.

Much blame has been attached to its policy, but, as Mrs. Spraggan says, "we think we're right, and we don't care what people say. And you know," she added, laughing, "we are trying to profit by England's mistakes!"

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Victorian Heroines.—III.

THE WOMEN OF DICKENS'S NOVELS.

There is one thing that everybody knows about Charles Dickens, a thing which those who do not read his books know particularly clearly—it is that the greatest English novelist has failed in his delineation of women. We are told, constantly and confidently—and the confidence is marked among those who add that they "prefer Thackeray," that Dickens draws for his heroines nothing but dolls, and that for other *rôles* he describes women, good or bad, young or old, rich or poor, either as mere eccentrics or as the creature of man to whom the dominant parts are given. Such summaries of Dickens's work are silly, but they will enjoy popularity where Dickens is not read; they have the appearance of insight which pleases an ill-informed audience, and in proportion as such an audience is pleased does the complacency of the critic wax, with an increased chance that young and impressionable people may be persuaded in their turn not to read Dickens, but rather to suggest that they have good literary reasons for not doing so. Thus they will deprive themselves of incalculable pleasure, and also of some sound lessons in virtue, for the beauties of modesty and unselfishness are the common message of Dickens's wonderful stories.

Dickens makes no feature in his work of the attempt to describe women with particular sympathy or insight, as Reade and Meredith have done, but his women are not conspicuous simply because to make them so would conflict in many instances with the purpose of his story or the way in which the plots are developed. The mere fact that the male characters are double as numerous as the female give the former a double chance of securing the principal attention.

Dickens's general purpose in writing his novels was to create detestation of the oppressor, and, therefore, the exposure of political evils, in which women were playing no part at first hand, save as sufferers, became his theme. He might have spent most of his talent in describing the victims, but he happened to do nothing of the sort, reserving his remarkable natural genius and uncanny powers of observation for the active agents in faulty conditions. In the category of his books directed expressly towards social reform come some of the most popular stories. Taking these in order of their writing *Oliver Twist* reveals the short-comings of the poor-law, a theme to which the author returns in *Our Mutual Friend*; *Nicholas Nickleby* grew out of righteous indignation against vile boarding schools; *Old Curiosity Shop* is a treatise against gambling, and all the suggested environment of the gambling applies only to men; *Bleak House* sets out the delays of legal procedure; *Little Dorrit* satirizes the methods of Government Departments, and riddles with scorn, as had already been done in *Pickwick*, the procedure against debtors by imprisonment; and *Hard Times* mocks the employment of statistics as a solution of social problems.

The first reason why there are comparatively few important women characters in Dickens's novels is that the underlying subjects, in accordance with his treatment of them on first hand information only, give less scope for ridicule and denunciation of women than of men.

Secondly, a plot by Dickens never has its focus in a sex question, so that the most exciting meeting-place of woman and man is but little explored by him. The love situations wear the air of being introduced perfunctorily, rather as though the author feels that something of the sort is due to the reader, than because he feels that he cannot tell as good a story and leave all such material on one side. The love interest is more developed than this in *Barnaby Rudge*, where we have suggestions of real romance; in *Martin Chuzzlewit*, where the relations of John Westlock and Ruth Pinch are prettily dealt with; in *Dombey and Son*, where the devotion of Walter Gay to Florence strikes true; and in *Our Mutual Friend*, where Bella Wilfer neatly conforms to heroine's mould by marrying John Rokesmith under that assumed name and completely to her worldly disadvantage, as far as she knew. But the love passages in these books are little more than episodes in long, loose narratives, and though they serve as centres—quite ineffective centres—of coherence, there is a deliberately cool treatment of them. Save Lizzie Hexam and Rosa Bud (the latter a terribly unlucky piece of nomenclature) few women in Dickens can be said to have aroused in their lovers real passion; the women in Dickens, as also his men, are deficient in a quality which heroes and heroines are expected to display, and which the lovers of Lizzie and Rosa displayed with cold and beastly fury, indicating the author's distaste for the theme.

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The second reason why there are comparatively few important women characters in Dickens's novels is that the love interest in them is much left for the reader to fill in, the amorous position between the parties having been indicated by an author who is in a hurry to tell of other things—of everything else, in fact.

Dickens has two supreme attractions for himself in telling his stories, when their underlying purpose has been settled and the outlines of the plot decided upon—namely to delineate the psychology of crime and to represent the sordid, terrible, and mournful things of life in their vivid contrasts; and he follows his bent with picturesqueness and with a humour which ranges from farce to finesse, from tolerance to scathing irony. But his abounding fancy leads him always far away from any original plan of composition—for instance, the reform of the legal punishment for debt becomes a mere episode in the bewildering, but delightful, muddle of *Little Dorrit*, and in *Pickwick* the actual commission was to write a series of comic adventures of would-be sporting Cockneys, and the world got instead one of its three great *picaresque* novels. Thus his purpose becomes much concealed and his plot transformed out of all recognition; yet he finds no room in his scheme for grand heroes or perfect heroines. In his excursions into the motives of crime, into the leading-up, palliating and aggravating circumstances, and into the after-impressions of the criminal, he exploited the sex that he knew better, preferring, as a very sincere artist and a deeply experienced man of the world, to depict what he knew rather than what he surmised, and to employ what he had himself gathered instead of relying upon the reports of others or the accepted traditions of fiction.

Dickens knew Lowten and Guppy personally, and the mean wiles of solicitors and their hangers-on were learnt by him in actual offices. In his constant attention as a newspaper reporter at police courts and inquests he heard the beginnings of many stories of crime, and although the male offender was far the more frequent, he undoubtedly realised that many foul things were conceived and carried out by women. Now Dickens loved the slums, and delighted in their picturesque horror and decrepitude, and he loved their denizens and delighted in their physical and moral distortions; but he viewed the circumstances which produced such sores on the fair body of civilisation with righteous detestation, and he regarded the fellow-men and women, plunged in these sloughs of misery with broad sympathy. Of the men he knew their temptations, but he knew their evil natures, and so found palliation insincere—Bill Sykes and Roger Riderhood are unmitigated ruffians; but Nancy had full allowance made for her position, while Pleasant, whose behaviour to sailormen belied her name, speedily becomes a reformed character when away from her father's sinister influence. But where the bad woman has to be drawn as the active agent, even though there is a male partner in the ill-doing, a pre-eminence in wickedness is given to the woman, and few more horrible harridans have been imagined than Miss Brass, who practised as an unqualified solicitor under cover of her craven brother, or Mrs. Heep, who perpetually supported Uriah in his overdrawn impersonation of humility. Dickens's first-class heroines are few, and so are his first-class female criminals; but the qualities that make up the criminal interested Dickens, as a writer, more than those which make up the heroine, and as a result his sinners are drawn with a vigour and an incisiveness which are wanting in his delineation of the saints.

These are the things which cause women to play a subsidiary part in the novels of Dickens. The stage is generally not set for an equal number of female parts—this is owing to the main underlying themes; conventional heroines are almost absent; and the passion of love is kept in the background. But all this does not mean that Dickens cannot, and has not, drawn a woman very well, who was not a grotesque but a natural woman; or that he regarded Dora Spenlove as an ideal. Dora, the inevitable argument for saying that Dickens loves the doll heroine, was never intended by her creator for a heroine. She belongs to the category of doomed children, completed by Nell Trent, who was nearly as old as Dora, Paul Dombey, and little Johnnie Harmon; and in the deaths of these children Dickens may have been betrayed into a maudlin vein by his own sentimentality, by that of his readers and by that of his date, but even here there are two ways of regarding these softly tragic episodes. Simple folk find their obvious message moving, and especially do older readers, returning to Dickens as a familiar friend, find that the proud armour of intellectuality may not prevent their hearts from being wrung. Lizzie Hexam is the best of Dickens's heroines; she is brave, lovable, and capable, and, despite the clever machinery of the story, directed to make us think otherwise, she is thrown away on her lover. But Kate Nickleby is a live girl, and so are Florence Dombey, Bella Wilfer, Biddy (Mr. Wopsle's second cousin), and Fanny Dorrit. The qualities of courage and patience radiate from "Little Dorrit," and one might have worse friends than Sissy Jupe. Esther Summerson's virtues are so insisted upon by Dickens that while she is loved by every one in the book all who read about her detest her.

The splendid grotesques who pervade Dickens's pages, to the profound annoyance of the slow-witted or the superior, are frequently women, though not so frequently as they are men. But of many of the women the names flash with gorgeous recollection into the mind. Sairey Gamp is as immortal as Mr. Micawber or Mr. Pecksniff, and "The Marchioness" in her way as good as any of Dickens's *valetaille* except Sam Weller; Betsy Trotwood, Mrs. Nickleby, Mrs. Jarley, Mrs. MacStinger, and Mrs. Pipchin are everlasting delights; Mrs. Jellyby, Flora Finching, and "Mr. F.'s Aunt" have, each in their turn, shaken their readers with laughter; and Mrs. Wilfer is as superb fun as any one of them. To his eccentric women Dickens was boundlessly generous.

Dickens did not become the greatest English novelist because of his insight into the heart, male or female, because of his psychological dexterity, or because of his mental profundity. His bottomless sympathy for the weak, his supreme power of observation, and his unequalled gifts of fun are the qualities which made him a force in the literature of the world, and in this proud position his women do him no discredit.

S.

Reviews.

Second Marriage. By Viola Meynell. (Martin Secker. 6s. net.)

At the end of each of Miss Meynell's books, and probably several times during the reading of them, one is moved to exclaim at her extraordinary power of observation, and at her exact expression of what she observes. Her perception of details, not only exterior details concerning a person's face or ice thawing in a dyke, but interior details — the mental kinks, the tiny, characteristic movements of the mind—are accurately registered by her careful and fastidious pen.

"On her last night Esther was sent to bed early. . . . And she had thanked each one punctiliously; and gone to bed with her grave importance; and her family sat below, quiet, with that kind of protective, patronising happiness which comes when another sleeps."

That is only one of a hundred such touches, which, in their contexts, suffice to make *Second Marriage* remarkable, for all its faults.

For it has grave faults. An air of unreality broods over it from end to end, despite the intimate knowledge the author has of two of her chief characters, Rose and Ismay. They are alive; but the author does not give life to Arnold, nor Jocelyn, nor the Channings, nor even to the other Glimours, though Mrs. Glimour and Esther are both well-sketched as far as they go. As for Maurice, who acts alternately as chorus, and confidante of the chief characters, he shares the artificiality of other stage-confidants; and his fight with Arnold has the air of having been invented to give him something definite to do. Of all the men in the book only Fred is real; and the relation of Rose with Fred, in all its phases, is admirably described; the following passage illustrates, though incompletely, the author's handling of the final stage of that relation:—

"And Rose listened, and felt that Fred's tears and confession and repentance cut through her heart; and yet she felt, too, something strange and cold for him. And if she could be cold to him now in his greatest moments . . . then it was certain that she did not love him. While she pitied him she was yet somehow appalled thus to see the whole of him—to see all his greatness—for it was not enough. If she had been thinking until now that she might love him again, this spectacle of his greatness finally undid her. It was fatal to see him at his best."

Miss Meynell's former books, even the one which avowedly had love for its theme, were remarkable for their extreme reticence on the subject of love-making; in this book she is only reticent compared with other writers. And this slackening, or as it might be regarded, this strengthening, this increase of directness, accompanies, and seems to have some connection with, an attempt on the writer's part to enlarge her canvas. It was a courageous attempt, but it has not been successful. The firm grip of both theme and characters that makes *Modern Lovers* such a good novel has slackened in *Second Marriage*; one feels that had the book concerned either Rose's love stories and Arnold's efforts to

set up a pump in the fen; or Arnold's and Ismay's story, instead of combining all three, it would have been better knit, more manageable, and therefore more real. The author interests us in the pump, despite its patron's shadowiness; the pump is real to us, and important; Rose, too, is important to us at the beginning, and Ismay at the end, but the two interests are not knit together; Rose leaves the story as Ismay enters it, and the fact that they all live in the Fen does not connect them artistically, though in reality it would do so.

Nevertheless, we are glad that Miss Meynell made the attempt. Her writing is often a delight; and we still look forward with pleasure to a novel in which she will surpass *Modern Lovers*. E. B. C. J.

Correspondence.

[We regret that, owing to paper restrictions, our space for Correspondence is very limited; correspondents are, therefore, urged to write briefly. Letters must reach us by first post on Monday, and must be written on one side of the paper only. If these conditions are complied with, we will do our best to print the most important letters.]

THE ETHICS OF PROPHYLAXIS.

Madam,—Dr. Saleeby's valuable paper on the Medical Prophylaxis of Venereal Disease in your current issue misses (as do, so far as I have seen, all the upholders of medical prophylaxis) the point of the objectors on moral grounds to this device. We agree entirely with those who say that the world would be neither more or less moral were venereal disease unknown. I, with Dr. Saleeby, would not dream of denying to the unconscious infant protection with a vaccine against these diseases, did such a vaccine exist. It is the method of getting rid of them we object to, not the fact of doing so (if in truth this can be accomplished by the "preventive packet" or any similar device, of which there is, to say the least, grave doubt). Our contention is that man is a moral animal and that therefore you cannot, in the nature of things, deal with a physical question which is bound up with a moral one without affecting his moral attitude. If those in authority hand out these packets to young soldiers or other citizens, however it is done or with whatever words it is accompanied, they connive at promiscuous sex intercourse. The young soldier has been taught almost certainly that promiscuous sex intercourse is anti-social, sinful, in religious language; the act of providing him with a method of preventing the possible bad consequences of this sin is evidence that you contemplate his committing it, in fact provide for it, and this cannot but undermine his sense of sinfulness. Suppose the State decided that as some men always have stolen and committed murder and arson it was no good going on the assumption that it was abnormal to do these things, they had better assume that men would always do them and try and provide means by which these acts could be carried out with as little damage as possible to the community, and arrange to put these means into the hands of possible criminals. They would surely produce a feeling in the minds of men that these crimes were necessary to human nature and, though it was not desirable that men should commit them, it certainly was expected of them. We should surely then recognise that the State was providing sanction for these acts?

Dr. Saleeby's suggestion that when the packets are handed out to young soldiers it should be with words breathing a standard of high morality, seems to me to lead to nothing but a campaign of cant, and I am certain would be recognised as such by eager and sincere young men.

Ethel M. N. Williams, M.D., D.P.H.

THE STATE AND MARRIAGE.

Madam,—Dr. Saleeby states, in last week's Common Cause, that "it is clear that . . . . marriage and the family are disappearing before our eyes, not least because of the heavy financial penalties which the State, in its blindness, visits upon them."

May I point out that the last Budget is contrived to penalise the married household still more heavily than it does already on incomes of £500 and over? By lumping the incomes of husband and wife together, the married pair with a joint income of £500 are now at a disproportionately higher rate even than before: this rate is higher than an unmarried pair pay who have a joint income of nearly £1,000, if each has something under £500.

The concession of £25 left untouched for each of a married man's dependants is not an adequate compensation, as it would obviously take five dependants to bring the exemption up to the £130 left free for *each* unmarried income-holder of under £500.

It will be found that a married couple with £600 a year even pay *more* tax than an unmarried couple with £700.

Now no woman wishes to shirk her share of the nation's burden, however heavy it may be, but it is hard to see why a small income should be so disproportionately taxed because she is married. When the husband's income is also small, the married household is at a glaring disadvantage.

Either the State is blind, or it wishes to act as a deterrent to marriage.

"Married."

REGULATION 40D D.O.R.A.

Madam,—With reference to the letter received from the War Office by Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon, concerning Regulation 40D, D.O.R.A., it should be unnecessary to point out the futility of the comparison, there set forth, of the position of a soldier with that of a woman under Regulation 40D. Yet, because quite a number of persons appear to be taken in by this statement of the case, I venture to ask you to allow me space for the purpose.

Under 40D, it is an offence for a woman, suffering from venereal disease in a communicable form, merely to "solicit or invite" sexual intercourse with a soldier.

On the other hand, a soldier *suffering from venereal disease* may solicit intercourse with an uninfected girl without committing an offence under the Regulation.

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Furthermore, he may, *while suffering from venereal disease,* have actual intercourse with an uninfected girl without committing an offence under the Regulation. He may also accuse a frivolous but innocent girl, who, in order to clear herself, will be obliged to submit to medical examination.

In short, as the official correspondent at the War Office himself naïvely points out, *it is no offence at all for a soldier to give or to risk giving a woman venereal disease.* The offence in his case is that of committing a breach of army discipline in concealing the fact that, whether innocently (as occasionally happens) or otherwise, he has acquired the disease.

Rachel Dyce Sharp.

[*We agree with our correspondent that the position of the soldier under Military Regulations does not justify the application of Regulation 40D to all women. But we think it is misleading to say that "a soldier suffering from venereal disease may solicit intercourse with an uninfected girl." We understand that soldiers known to have venereal disease are confined in hospital and cannot, therefore, have or solicit sexual intercourse, while soldiers who conceal the fact that they have the disease are liable to two years' imprisonment with hard labour* —Ed., Common Cause.]

"THE COMMON CAUSE" AND CONTROVERSIAL SUBJECTS.

Madam,—May I send a line in hearty support of your Note last week, "The Common Cause and Controversial Subjects." While feminists are still alive they will not cease from mental fight, and where this striving together is, there is a centre of the life of their movement. "Let us have nothing controversial" is a phrase so pleasant to some ears, so pregnant with repose, and indeed now and again, in certain connections, so undoubtedly possessed of a certain usefulness, that within its comfortable folds (if I may make free with metaphor) lies the haven where a certain type of mind would be. But it is not just that type which makes history. And with all the tragedy of the world as we see it to-day, there is one note of high comedy—it is, at least, in flux, and we women can share with men the responsibility of remaking it.

Good luck, then, to The Common Cause when it invites its contributors to write stuff they really believe in, and which, therefore, carries conviction to others, or, if it does not, let the contributors take a friendly kick from their fellows and, within the limits of self respect and above all of respect for truth, let us quarrel in The Common Cause as brothers and sisters should.

The Common Cause is to be foremost among feminist organs of thought —within the limits defined in your Note, let it then be free. There is ample reading matter in "Home Chat," in "The Lady," in parish magazines too numerous to mention; but all the same we want our Common Cause, and if it is not free it will wilt and we shall not have it any more.

A. Helen Ward.

"WOMAN SUFFRAGE IN OTHER LANDS."

Madam,—Mrs. Husted Harper of New York has kindly pointed out to me "a few small errors" in my article on "Woman Suffrage in Other Lands" in your issue of March 15th, and I shall be glad if you can publish these corrections :—

1. Mrs. Harper writes that it was not the local convention in Seneca Falls in 1848 which inspired Mrs. Taylor's article in the *Westminster Review*, but a more national one at Worcester, Mass., two years later.

2. Utah actually voted woman suffrage in November, 1895, and the date usually given and quoted by me of 1896 is a mistake due to the fact that the President signed the Act of Congress admitting Utah as a State in January, 1896.

3. Primary suffrage in Arkansas was omitted.

4. Congress should not be spoken of as "passing" the amendment, as Congress cannot *pass* it. It must be submitted by Congress, ratified by the State Legislatures, and then declared by Congress to be a part of the National Constitution. It has to be ratified by *three-fourths* (not two-thirds). Mrs. Harper adds :—

> "In regard to the vote of Miss Jeannette Rankin, it should be said in justice to her that although she voted against the United States entering the war, as did forty-nine other members of the Lower House, from the time it did so until the present she has supported loyally every measure for the carrying on of the war, even for the Conscription Act, which is more than can be said for a number of the men who voted as she did at the beginning."

In the interests of accuracy I am very glad to have Mrs. Harper's corrections.

M. Sheepshanks.

THE LABOUR SAVING HOUSE.

Madam,—Your correspondent, Miss Emma Common, says that, in my review of *The Labour Saving House,* I "assume that . . . housekeeping will develop . . . on communal lines" and "that housekeeping then . . . will be expertly done." She has misunderstood me. I do firmly believe that housekeeping must and will be carried on more in common; but I also believe (and have several times said in print) that, *unless the householders retain the control of their housekeeping,* that state of affairs will be worse even than the present state. There is no business firm in existence to whom I would willingly entrust my own domestic concerns.

If Miss Common is proposing to do her own house work, may I suggest to her that she would find much to interest her in Lady Frazer's *First Aid to the Servantless*—a delightful little book, as well as in *The Labour Saving House?*

Clementina Black.

WOMEN'S EDUCATION.

Madam,—My attention has only to-day been drawn to a letter in your issue of April 19th, signed C. I. Coxhead, convicting me of an error in writing of Cheltenham College as the pioneer in the education of the upper class girl. My only excuse is that which Dr. Johnson put forward on a similar occasion, when a lady convicted him of an error in "The Dixonary," (I cannot get away from Miss Pinkerton) "Ignorance, Madam, sheer ignorance."

H. P. Cholmeley.

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Mrs. Garrett and Miss Giles (Further Sale of Necklaces)		14	6
Miss A. Lund	5	0	0
Miss Lake	2	0	0
Brentwood W.S.S., per Miss de Steiger	1	10	0
	£569	19	10

N.U.W.S.S. Scottish Women's Hospitals.

	£	s.	d.
Forward as per list of April 18th, 1918	310,081	5	8
Further donations received to April 25th, 1918:—			
Collections from visitors at Kyles of Bute Hydro, on April 15th, 1918, per Mrs. R. G. Robertson (Sallanches)	17	5	6
*Pupils Grange School, Bo'ness, per M. S. Andrew, Esq., Headmaster	3	14	6
*Clerks in the Claims and Record Office, Kew, per Miss Janet Smith, to continue "Claims and Record Office, Kew" Bed (Villers-Cotterets)	5	18	9
*Per Mrs. Aldridge, Organiser, S.W.H.: Results of Meetings held at *Messrs. Vickers, Ltd.* (for Serbia), "Staff War Fund Committee" (£18 16s.), Special Collection (£3 4s.), "Workmen, Rutland Works," per Jno. W. Laister, Esq., Messrs. Samuel Osborn & Co. Ltd., Sheffield (£12 17s. 6d.), South Leeds Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, voluntary levy, resulting from meeting (Serbia) (£8), Employees, Messrs. T. F. Braine & Co. Ltd., Leeds, result of three meetings (Serbia) (£4 10s.), Sheffield Wesleyan Mission, result of meeting in the Victoria Hall, Sheffield (Serbia) (£3), Leeds West Branch of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers (£1 16s. 1d.), Leeds 12th Branch of Amalgamated			

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Part Proceeds of Sale of Work by Women's Guild of Rendall Parish Church, per Rev. James Higgins	10	0	0
Mrs. Goodwin	1	0	0
Woman's Meeting of Buckhaven Baptist Church, per Mrs. R. Sinclair, Hon. Sec.		10	0
	£310,471	4	1

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	£	s.	d.
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Anon., per Mrs. Flinders Petrie	20	0	0
Banstead and Walton District W.S.S., per Miss D. E. Cooper	1	0	0
Bedford Froebel Society Meeting, per Miss Reaney	4	11	9
British School of Archæology in Egypt, per Mrs. Flinders Petrie	19	19	0
Clayton, Mrs.		2	6
Courtney, Miss A. D.	2	2	0
Dodds, Mrs.	5	0	0
Downe Bed, per Miss O. M. Willis	51	4	0
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Eden, Mrs.	1	1	0
Eltham Hostels Girls' Recreation Club Meeting, Collection, per Miss Cooper	5	10	0
Fooks, Mrs.	5	0	0
Goodrich, Miss J. G.		5	0
Higinbottom, Miss May	2	2	0
Hinde, Mrs. (monthly don.) ...		5	0
Hoe, Per Miss	10	19	9
Holland, Mrs. Amy	10	0	0
Howard, Per Lady Isabella ...	100	0	0
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Niblett, Mrs.	5	0	0
Oxenford, Mrs.	1	1	0
Ottley, Per the Rev. Canon Bickersteth	1	0	0
Petrie, Per Mrs. Flinders ...	9	15	0
Pott, Reginald, Esq.	5	0	0
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Purchon, W. S., Esq.	1	13	0
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Wilson, Mrs. J. R.	5	0	0
Williams, O. F., Esq.	3	3	0
Williams, Mrs. Theodore ...	10	0	0
Wimbledon Meeting Collection, per Miss Parton	40	8	0
Wood, Miss A. J.	1	10	0
	£87,307	8	2

Reports from Societies.

[Reports must reach THE COMMON CAUSE *on Monday.]*

PLYMOUTH.—The following Resolution was passed by the Plymouth Society at their last meeting: "That the Plymouth Society of the N.U.W.S.S. continue as hitherto, and that steps be taken to initiate a Women Citizens' Association upon the lines of the scheme as passed by the Council in March." The sum of £1 16s. was collected for the Celebration Fund, and the Society further proposes to get guarantees towards £200 with the idea of forming an effective Women Citizens' Association.

KESWICK.—A public meeting to welcome the enfranchisement of woman was held in the Pavilion on April 2nd. Chairman: F. E. Marshall, Esq. Speakers: The Lady Rochdale, Miss Catherine E. Marshall, Dr. Goodchild. The meeting was an excellent one. The rejoicing was sober but very real. All the speakers dwelt on the responsibility of the vote and of the opportunities now open to women of showing that the vote was "not the end but the beginning." Dr. Goodchild held that women would bring fresh minds to deal with national difficulties and that there was great scope for new ideas. The meeting was reported at length in the local papers and the general verdict was that Keswick had reason to be glad that so good a meeting had crowned the work of so many anxious years of expectancy. The collection in aid of THE COMMON CAUSE 3rd Hut was over £5, the Keswick Society having paid all the expenses of the meeting. A letter of congratulation to Mrs. Fawcett was voted to be sent by the chairman.

BARNSLEY.—At a members' meeting on April 19th, the following resolution was passed:—"That this meeting sends love and thanks to Mrs. Fawcett for her great work in securing the enfranchisement of women, and trusts that she may live long to use her political power and influence."

WOLVERTON.—The annual meeting was held on St. George's Day, Canon Harnett, the President, being in the chair. The secretary read the report of the year's work, but added that the labour was forgotten in the joy of success. She pointed out that the vote was but the opportunity given women for work of real value to the community.

After the election of officers for the ensuing year, the work of the Citizens' Association was discussed and the following resolution unanimously carried:—"That the members of this Wolverton Branch of the N.U.W.S.S. desire to convey to their honoured leader, Mrs. Fawcett, their warm congratulations on the successful attainment of the object of her life-long labour, and to express their gratitude for her great service to the cause of justice and freedom."

HOUSING CONFERENCE AT HANLEY.

A conference on Housing was held under the auspices of the Hanley W. S. Society at Hanley Town Hall on April 22nd. The organisations represented were:—Stoke-on-Trent Education Committee, The National Federation of Women Teachers, the N.U.W.W., the British Women's Temperance Association, the Women's Co-operative Guilds of Fenton, Burslem and Hanley, the W.E.A., the N.S.W.W., the N.U.W.S.S. (local branch) and ten others. The speakers were Miss Audrey Wedgwood (President), Mrs. Ring, Dr. Petiqune Johnson, and debate ensued. The following resolution was passed:—

"In view of the promise of the Local Government Board that 300,000 working-class houses shall be built during the first year after the war, this conference, composed of representatives of the local branches of 16 women's organisations, urgently requests (1) that in order that the proposed new houses may meet the needs of those who are to live in them the Local Government Board shall before passing any housing plans obtain the advice of representative working women, and (2) that the houses shall be built as far as possible in accordance with the views expressed at this conference," with an addendum recommending the erection of two "sample" houses, so that they could receive criticisms.

CHILDREN'S SLEEP.

The London County Council has circulated 100,000 copies of a leaflet urging parents to ensure their children having enough sleep, and giving a scale of amounts of sleep necessary at different ages. It is said that education has lately suffered from the fatigue of children who for that reason cannot give attention to their lessons.

Forthcoming Meetings (N.U.W.S.S.)

MAY 3.

Leicester—Old Town Hall—Annual Meeting—Speaker: Mrs. Ring 5.30 p.m.

MAY 6.

Hampstead—Mothers' Union, St. Paul's Schools, Winchester Road, N.W.—Subject: "Women's New Responsibilities"—Speaker: Mrs. Croom-Johnson 3 p.m.

MAY 7.

Bristol—40, Park Street—Subject: "Who is Qualified for the Vote?"—Speaker: Miss Tanner 5.30 p.m.

MAY 8.

Solihull—Lecture on the Use of the Vote—Mrs. Ring 5.30 p.m.

MAY 9.

Lambeth—Brew House, St. Mary's Church, Lambeth Road—Subject: "Parent and Child"—Speaker: Miss Walford 3 p.m.

Denmark Hill—People's Church, Windsor Road—Fortnightly Citizen's Discussions Circle 7 p.m.

MAY 10.

Bristol—Winscombe—Speaker: Mrs. W. C. H. Cross 5.30 p.m.

Coming Events.

MAY 5th.—Central London Branch of the Licensed Union of Vehicle Workers will meet on Women's Service, 58, Victoria Street—All women motor drivers and mechanics are welcome 3 p.m.

MAY 7th.—Memorial Hall—Conference on Women and the New Spiritual Impulse (for speakers, see last week's COMMON CAUSE)—Chair throughout: Miss A. Maude Royden, who will give closing address—1s. seats from Free Church League for W.S., 30, Holborn Hall, W.C. 1 3.0-5.0 p.m. and 6.0-7.0 p.m.

MAY 10th.—Assembly Rooms, Townhall, Hereford—The Council of the Royal Sanitary Institute—"Tuberculosis: Its Treatment and Present Position."—Speaker: D. Gold, M.D., D.P.H. 5 p.m.

MAY 11th.—Second Session of above—"Cost and Construction of Workmen's Dwellings, Roads, &c., in connection with Town Planning"—Speaker: John Parker. 10 a.m.

Mrs. Leiper, L.D.S., has been appointed School Dentist by the Essex Education Committee at a salary of £250.

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ANNOUNCEMENT.

BRITAIN AND INDIA.

PUBLIC MEETING at the Caxton Hall, Monday, May 6th, at 7 p.m. Speakers: Lady Emily Lutyens, D. Graham-Pole, LL.D., on "Personal Impressions of India To-day," J. M. Parikh on "Why India wants Home Rule," Henry S. L. Polak on "India's Relations to the Dominions and Colonies." Admission free.

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[Continued on page 36

Continued from page 35

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